

JADWIGA MISZALSKA



<https://orcid.org/0000-0001-7122-9396>

Jagiellonian University, Kraków

[jadwiga.miszalska@uj.edu.pl](mailto:jadwiga.miszalska@uj.edu.pl)

## POLISH SEVENTEENTH-CENTURY TRANSLATIONS OF JESUIT ACCOUNTS FROM THE FAR EAST IN THE CONTEXT OF TRANSLATION HISTORY\*

---

### Abstract

Right from the beginning of their missionary activity, the Jesuits painstakingly drafted and collected various documents. These accounts were printed in Latin or Italian, and soon translated into other languages. In Poland, in the first three decades of the seventeenth century, more than a dozen reports from China, Japan, Vietnam, and Tibet were printed. They provide first eye-witness accounts from these territories, not only in Poland, but in Europe at large. Polish translations offer material for various kinds of analysis. This article discusses the work of two Polish translators, members of the Society of Jesus, who used different strategies depending on their intended target readership. Szymon Wysocki was interested mainly in religious aspects of the missions to the Far East, and he edited out most of the culture-specific items, as his writing was dedicated to young adepts of the Society. Fryderyk Szembek, on the other hand, paid attention also to cultural aspects of the accounts he translated. However, his attitude towards cultural otherness was less neutral than in the source texts. His translations constituted an important source of knowledge for the seventeenth-century Polish reader. Both translators had to cope with challenges such as proper names or culturally marked vocabulary and with the genre specificity

---

\* This article was originally published in Polish in *Przekładaniec* vol. 36/2018 (pp. 25–43). The English version was published with the financial support from the Polish Ministry of Science and Higher Education (643/P-DUN/2018).

of these texts, which were new to the Polish literary system. In my research, I use the methodological framework of polysystem theory, Lefevere's theory of rewriting, and Pym's concepts in the history of translation. I also refer to translation sociology, theory of reportage, history of culture, and history of languages.

**Keywords:** translation history, Jesuit accounts from Far East, culture-specific items, rewriting

The cultural turn in Translation Studies, which propounds the historical moment as a shaping force of translation, has given momentum to research in both historic translations and the development of translation theory. Ever since, it has become increasingly apparent that there is no such thing as generally applicable and always relevant rules of translation (Bassnett, Lefevere 1990: 5). The way translators approach any text they translate is conditioned by a variety of factors and restrictions, which are not always literary by nature, but have more to do with political, social, and economic determinants (Bassnett, Lefevere 1990: 12). As postulated by researchers in Translation Studies, any insights into the nature of translation have to be grounded in particular case studies. Only a series of phenomena observed in practice allow certain generalisations, which in turn may (if need be) find application in translation activity. An interest in the history of translation practice gave rise to translation archaeology as an inherent part of translation history (Pym 2014: 5). An attempt at creating translation history, which to a large extent is a history of relations between cultures, calls for large quantities of data about texts, places, or names (Pym 2009: 24). The data can be obtained through preliminary studies that involve making lists of references or catalogues, which may later be used (in line with research goals and hypotheses) to create a textual corpus for analysis (Pym 2014: 38–54). Additionally, prior to any attempt at any strictly textual analysis of a particular translation, one has to describe the following circumstances: “who translated what, where, when, for whom and with what effect” (Pym 2014: 5; D’hulst 2010: 399). These findings may allow a better understanding and explanation of the decisions taken in the translation process. This in turn may produce analysis that goes beyond a mere pointing out of errors and deviations from the original.

One such list of references was elaborated in two studies (carried out from 2003–2009) on the Polish translations of Italian literature from the sixteenth century until today (Gurgul *et al.* 2007; Miszalska *et al.* 2011). The selection of materials (prints and manuscripts) called for a series of decisions described by Pym. However, each of these decisions may be a moot point in the context of the literature of the Renaissance or Baroque. One such critical point is the definition of translation (Pym 2014: 55–70). We have adopted an inclusive definition of translation in the studies. We have also applied the following principle for the rather free rules that Polish literary translators used in the Renaissance or Baroque: apart from information included in the paratext, we also found it important to compare and contrast the content of the implied original and translation. More often than not our intuitive choices proved to be right: by spotting similar titles, we were able to identify a particular text as a translation even if no previous information was available to support the hypothesis. Given fluid genre boundaries in the literature of the Renaissance or Baroque, we have also decided to include boundary genres or non-fiction literature in the narrative section. A case in point are hagiographies or travelogues, such as those described in this article, which deploy literary techniques that are typical of fiction.

By developing a comprehensive reference list, we were able to identify a corpus for historical analysis: a series of translations of the accounts from the missions in the Far East (predominantly by Jesuit authors). From 1600–1630, at least eleven such accounts were translated into Polish from Italian and Latin (rare) originals. Five or six were offered by Szymon Wysocki, two by Fryderyk Szembek, one by Paweł Śliwski (the only non-Jesuit in the company), and two by anonymous authors.<sup>1</sup> For want of other materials, this corpus was treated as a representative sample of a particular literary activity and – apart from other genres (hagiographies, fictional biographies, and accounts of religious or cultural events and natural disasters) – was included in a chapter on the translations of non-fiction literature, which is a contribution to the history of Polish translations from Italian until 1800 (Miszalska 2015: 131–182). We worked on a premise that such a corpus would gain a broader meaning in this context, and open up subsequent perspectives for interpretation. This in turn would add to the relevance of the study. If translation history is a history of relations between cultures, the analysis of particular phenomena may elucidate the dynamic and origins of

---

<sup>1</sup> The last two in the series are yet to be studied in detail (the originals are difficult to find).

the transformation of a receiving culture. This study may be useful to those language historians who investigate the flow of borrowings. Those who examine the historical development of non-fiction genres may also find this analysis of interest, as it shows how these genres belong in their receiving culture system. It may also be intriguing to those researchers in Cultural Studies who explore the development and evolution of the stereotypes of “the exotic” or “the foreign”. Naturally, the outcomes offered in the study allow only partial conclusions and hypotheses.

The first account of Jesuit missions to be printed in Polish was that of the mission in America and the Philippines by Diego de Torres Bollo, S.J.; it was first published in Rome in 1603, and in Poland the same year ([Anonymous] 1603), its likely translator being Szymon Wysocki, S.J. The Jesuit Order did not embark on their missionary activity until the mid-sixteenth century (missions had previously been conducted by Franciscan and Dominican friars). However, they were quick to arrive in America and the Far East. Francis Xavier, S.J., arrived in India in 1542, and started his missionary activity in Japan in 1547. Matteo Ricci embarked on his mission in Canton (today’s Guangzhou) in 1583. The Society of Jesus, which in fact emerged as the leading missionary order, created an extremely efficient system of communication (Konior 2013: 18–19). In 1547, Juan Alfonso de Polanco, S.J., a secretary to Saint Ignatius de Loyola, created the first guidelines for the authors of *litterae annuae* (annual letters), which every Jesuit province was obliged to despatch to the General Curia in Rome (Friedrich 2008: 8). Some letters were purely administrative in nature, others offered broader narratives on the activity of the Society of Jesus both in Europe and in overseas territories. In ca. 1600, *relationes* (accounts focused purely on the missions) were differentiated from annual letters. This differentiation was not always markedly distinct, as the reports from America or Asia (as demonstrated in the subsequent sections of the article) were presented as both “annual letters” or “accounts”. Both *litterae annuae* and *relationes* were designed to teach and convert by describing the quotidian, historical events, and exemplary figures. Letters from overseas missions differed from their European counterparts in that they provided information on culture or geography. The letters were usually – not always, however – written in Latin, while the accounts were provided in vernacular languages. The former were intended for the internal use of the Society of Jesus. More informative in nature, they were circulated within the order. With their intriguing narratives, the latter were in turn expected to attract a larger group of readers and listeners. The choice of

the audience and the function of the text had an effect on its language, form, and style, as well as the likelihood of its publication (Konior 2013: 6–7).

*Litterae annuae* had a defined structure. The same goes for *relationes*, which were often similar. They started with a brief account of the political situation in a mission country, which was sometimes complemented with historical and “ethnographic” information. The subsequent chapter was devoted to the advances of Christianity and the mission in a given country. The authors would then describe the situation of the congregation in general, and particular outposts (colleges and monastic houses) in detail. The number of conversions, daily challenges, and an overview of miracles were also provided.

I will start the analysis of the Polish translations of the Jesuit reports from the missions in China and Japan with a detailed reading of the original and the translation. I am going to focus on differences, most notably omissions and amplifications. As a study material, I have selected excerpts from the translations created by two Jesuit fathers: Szymon Wysocki and Fryderyk Szembek.

From 1608–1616, Wysocki translated accounts created by four illustrious Jesuit missionaries: Luis Cerqueira (from Portugal), Bishop of Funai in Japan; Matteo Ricci (from Italy), the most eminent missionary in China; João Rodrigues (from Portugal), sometimes confused with his more recognised namesake (called Tçuzu); and Nicolas Trigault (from France), who is believed to have been one of the first sinologists. Cerqueira’s report from Japan (Cerqueira 1607) was published in Poland in 1608 (Wysocki 1608). The Polish text is markedly shorter than the original. The translator seems to have made several deliberate reductions. The following passage describes repressions that Japanese converts to Christianity suffered from their ruler:<sup>2</sup>

Così penso ancor’io rispose **Canziuge**, ma perché non mi par verosimile, che nello scritto datomi ci sia falsità, farò qui venire un **bonzo Fochesciù** e tu **Cacuizaimone** chiamerai tutti i soldati nobili (**samburai** si chiamano da Giaponesi) e farai che in segno di farsi **Fochescius** si mettino sopra le teste il **Focchechio**, a da questo si conoscerà chi è, o non è Cristiano, e se persona repugnerà a questo commandamento nostro, senza dir altro la faremo ammazzare. Questo **Focchechio** è un libro nel quale si contiene la dottrina di questa setta maledetta di **Fochescius**; setta che professa, stima et ama più di qualunque altra

<sup>2</sup> Proper names and vocabulary derived from Oriental languages are marked in bold.

**Canziuge.** E il mettersi questo libro sul capo è la cerimonia et il contrasegno di seguitarla e professarla (Cerqueira 1607: 14).

[I am of the same mind, Canziuge said in reply; however, since I don't think the letter I received is untruthful in any way, I shall send for Bonzo Fochesciù, and you, Cacuizaimone, will call in all the noble knights (who go by the name of samurai in Japan) and you will make sure that, when they see the sign of Fochescius, they will put Focchechio on their heads. You will then know who of them are Christians, and who are not. Should anyone refuse to obey, we will have them killed (without sparing a word). Focchechio is a book wherein the creed of the sect of Fochescius is written, let them be damned. Canziuge belongs in their ranks; he respects and loves them more than any other. Those who put the book on their heads show they believe in this religion and follow its precepts.]<sup>3</sup>

Potem rzekł król, tak i ja to rozumiem, ale żeby to pewna była, niech tu się stawi wnetże **Bonzyus** z **Fechesciej** (seкта to była, w której się ten tyran kochał) niech też wszyscy żołnierze i szlachta rycerska tu przybędzie i kto z nich na głowę swoją włożyć księgę dopuści, w której się tajemnice sekty mojej zamykają, znakiem to będzie, że oni wolę moją pełnią (Wysocki 1608: B4 v).<sup>4</sup>

[The king said in reply, I agree with you, but since I must be certain, I want you to send this instant for **Bonzyus** of **Fechesciu** (the sect the tyrant was so enamoured of), let the soldiers and knightly nobility come, and those who put a book containing the mysteries of my sect on their heads, they are my followers who will do my bidding.]

The Polish version is markedly shorter. Wysocki provides a succinct summary of the original in which he skips most of the heavily culture-specific proper names. In subsequent passages, whenever he refers to the foreign item rendered in Italian as *bonzo*, he adds the following explanation: “bonzyusa albo popa sekty swojej” [*bonzyus* or the *pop* of his sect]. Interestingly, the translator uses the word *pop* [Orthodox priest] instead of more general vocabulary such as *kapłan* [priest] or the typically Roman Catholic *ksiądz* [Catholic priest]. One likely reason for this is that the term carries the undertone of strangeness to Roman Catholics, and it also denotes religious dissidence.

<sup>3</sup> Unless indicated otherwise, all translations are provided by the translator (B.S.) based on either the author's (J.M.) literal rendering of the quotes or Wysocki's and Szembek's translations of the accounts. Quotes from Wysocki and Szembek are also provided in the original.

<sup>4</sup> For prints without page numbers, a signature number was provided.

Rodrigues's account of the missions in Japan (Rodrigues 1610) amply describes a complex political situation, its causes firmly rooted in the past. Additionally, the author provides some information on the geography of the region. As in the following passage:

E così persuadendosi, che per conseguir questo suo intento, era di gran momento fortificare i regni di **Quanto**, de' quali era egli signore infin dal tempo di **Taicò**, nella città di **Giendo** capo di detti regni (posta in quello di **Musasci** e da **Meaco** 12 giorni lontana, quasi nel fine di **Giappone** verso levante) fece edificare una cittadella e altri forti; cingendo anche la città stessa con muraglie grosse, e forti, a spese de' signori di **Giappone**, che per ordine del **Cubò** vi andarono, ciascuno con la sua gente, a lavorarvi dal febbraio infino ad agosto e settembre (Rodrigues 1610: 3–4).

[As he realised it was an opportune moment to fulfil his plan, in order to strengthen the Kingdom of Quanto, which he had ruled since Taicò's reign in the city of Giendo, which is the capital of these kingdoms (located in the province of Musasci, twelve days' ride away from Meaco, almost at the edge of Japan to the east), he ordered a citadel and other forts to be built, encircling the city with hefty walls at the expense of the Japanese nobility, who on Cubò's orders, arrived with their bondmen to perform the work from February to August and September.]

A tak mając za to, żeby zamysłu swego dopiął, zdało mu się za rzecz bardzo należącą zmocnić królestwa **Quanty**, których z dawna był panem, w mieście **Giendo**, które jest głową tych królestw (leżące dwanaście dni jazdy od **Meaku**, jakoby już na granicach **japońskich** na wschód słońca) kazał zbudować zamek ze wszelką municją, opasując też i samo miasto murami mięszymi i mocnymi, nakładem panów z **Japonii**, którzy z rozkazania królewskiego, tam każdy z nich szedł z ludem swoim na robotę, od księżyca lutego do sierpnia i września (Wysocki 1611: A r).

[As he proceeded to fulfil his design, he saw fit to strengthen the Kingdom of **Quanto**, which he had ruled for a long time, in the city of **Giendo**, which is the capital of these kingdoms (located twelve days' ride away from **Meaco**, at the **Japanese** frontier to the east), he ordered a castle with all the munitions to be built, engirdling the city itself with thick and sturdy walls, at the expense of **Japanese** noblemen, who, at royal behest, came with their people to perform the work, from February to August and September.]

In the passages, the translator slightly changes his approach: there are no substantial cuts; however, some of the proper names are omitted. Even

so, Wysocki finds it easier to handle foreign proper names, and he eliminates only those names that hamper the understanding of the text. The text nonetheless features certain amplifications. Explanations such as “bonzów swoich, a ci są popi pogańscy” [their *bonzos*, who are pagan *pops* (Orthodox priests)] are a case in point (Wysocki 1611: A v). The comparison of Rodriques’s account with Wysocki’s translation shows that the latter features fewer cuts than the translation from Cerqueira. One likely reason for this is that the account is focused purely on the missionary activity.

A different example is that of an account by Nicolas Trigault, a sinologist who first developed the Latin transcription system for Chinese characters. Trigault’s letters from 1610 and 1611 were abridged almost by half in translation. Detailed descriptions of particular Jesuit houses and their activity were edited out. Most notably, however, which is also typical of such translations, an extended chapter on Chinese culture and social life was omitted. Similarly, no account was provided of the procedural issues (caused by local laws) that hindered the burial of Father Matteo Ricci, who had died in 1609.

Trigault describes the precarious circumstances of those mandarins who wanted to convert to Christianity (despite the friendly attitude of the local rulers to the missionaries). The translator captures all this in just one sentence:

Era questo uno dei primi mandarini di questa regia e di quelli che Tauli s’addimandano al cui tribunale stanno soggetti alcuni rioni della città; e all’istesso appartengono i negozii della provincia che in questa corte si trattano, oltre a queste cose è consigliere di stato. Questi è cittadino della metropoli di Cantone chiamato prima Cem, e poi nel battesimo addimandato col nome di apostolo S. Thomaso. E mentre stette in Pachino ebbe gran familiarità col P. Matteo e altri suoi compagni e senza difficoltà alcuna permise che un suo figliuolo d’età di quindici anni si facesse Christiano (Trigault 1615: 133–134).

[He was one the kingdom’s finest mandarins, who go by the name of Tauli and who have some of the city’s districts in their jurisdiction. He is also in charge of the negotiations concerning provinces, which are held at the court; moreover, he is a state advisor. He is the citizen of the metropolis of Kanton. Previously called Cem, he was christened with the name of Saint Thomas the Apostle. When in Beijing, he got to know Father Matteo well and his other companions, and he willingly permitted his fifteen-year-old son to be baptised.]

Ponieważ był z pierwszych Mandarynów dworu królewskiego. Ten dobrze przedtym mając wielkie zachowanie z X. Riccym i z inszemi jęgo towa-



rzyszmi, bez trudności dopuścił, że synaczka w piętnastu lat dał ochrzcić (Wysocki 1616: H2 v).

[Since he was one of the finest Mandarins of the royal court. Previously, he had been friends with X. Riccy and his companions, and he willingly allowed his fifteen-year-old son to be baptised.]

These very few excerpts provide a sufficient sample for the examination of Wysocki's choices as a translator. The analysis will be provided in subsequent sections, which elucidate the figure of the translator and the where, when, and how of his texts.

Twenty years later, a unique set of works was translated and printed by Fryderyk Szembek. The publication collected the first European eyewitness accounts from Tibet and Vietnam. In 1628, Szembek had his little book *Tybet wielkie państwo w Azyey (...) to jest krótkie opisanie zwyczajów, nabożeństwa i wiary...* [Tibet, a great country in Asia (...) or a brief description of customs, religious rituals, and faith...] published in Kraków (Szembek 1628). The book provides a translation of the second annual letter by Antonio de Andrade, S.J., (1580–1634), who described his expedition to Tibet (de Andrade 1628). The missionary departed from Agra, India, in 1624, and reached Tsaparang, the capital of the Kingdom of Guge in Western Tibet, where he spent twenty-five days and established a friendly rapport with its ruler (Didier 1996). On his return to Agra, he sent his first letter to the Superior Provincial in Portugal. Published in 1626, the letter was soon translated into many different languages, including Italian in 1627 (de Andrade 1627). In 1625, de Andrade embarked on his second expedition to Tibet, where he stayed until 1627 (for sure) or even longer. The expedition resulted in a second letter, which was despatched to the Superior General of the Society of Jesus in Rome, and later translated by Szembek.

Szembek's translation differs from that of Wysocki's in that he does not skip proper names or foreign vocabulary. An excerpt in which the author elucidates on Buddhism and its selected aspects is a case in point:

Attediarei troppo con la lunghezza V. P., se volessi riferire quanto occorre in queste dispute però dirò quello che mi avvenne in tre solamente. Fu la prima. Che cosa era Dio il quale dicono che è trino e uno, però nello spiegare aggiungono varie cose molto da ridere. Addimandano Dio **Lamà Conioci** che è a dire come la prima persona, la seconda **Chò Conioci** che vuol dire Libro grande, la terza **Sanguya Conioci** cioè veder e amar nella gloria. Interrogai se questa

seconda persona addimandata **Chò Conioci**, cioè Libro grande, era il libro che leggono e tengono nelle mani, mi risposero che sì (de Andrade 1628: 27).

[I would exhaust the Reverend Father were I to describe everything I saw during these debates, but I'll nonetheless only describe what happened during three discussions. Here is the first one. It was concerned with what God is, who they believe is threefold and one, and they later add different laughable things. They call God Lamà Conioci, which means the first person, the second is Chò Conioci, that is, the great Book, and the third is Sanguya Conioci, that is, to see and love in glory. I asked them if the second person called Chò Conioci, that is, the great Book, is the book they read and held in their hands, and they confirmed.]

Sila by pisać foremnych rzeczy, które się w rozmowach i sporkach z **Lamasa-mi** trafiały. (...) Pierwsza była, co jest Pan Bóg, o którym oni twierdzą, że jest w Trójcy jeden; jednak, gdy to, co mówią, wykladać chcą, wiele rzeczy śmiechu wielkiego godnych przydają. Twierdzą, że ten Pan Bóg ma Syna, który jest współ i Bogiem i człowiekiem i że jako umarł, jest temu lat tysiąc i sześćset, abo coś mniej abo li więcej i że po tym do nieba wstąpił, gdzie z Ojcem swoim jest. Że ten Syn Boży miał matkę białogłową i że ta za nim poszła do nieba i tam z nim spólnie przebywa. Zowią Tróję świętą **Lama Conioci**, to jest jakby pierwsza osoba; wtórą nazywają **Cho Conioci**, to jest Księga wielka, a trzecią **Sanguya Conioci** to jest widzieć i miłować Pana Boga w chwale. Spytani od ojca Antoniego, jeśli wtóra Pana Boga ich osoba, rzeczona Księga wielka, był on ich szpargał, na którym ledwie nieustawnie czytają i w rękach go noszą. Odpowiedzieli, że tak jest (Szembek 2004: 209).

[One could describe in picturesque detail the things Lamas discussed in these debates. (...) The first was concerned with what God is, which they say is threefold and one; however, when they try to explain what they say, they add a lot of things that are worthy of ridicule. They claim that their God has a Son, who is both Divine and human, and when he died, which was one thousand and six hundred years ago, or more or less to that effect, he ascended to heaven, where he sits with his Father; that this Son of God of theirs has a mother, a married woman, who was assumed with him into heaven, where they are now together. They call the Holy Trinity **Lama Conioci**, which is to say, the first person; they call the second person **Cho Conioci**, that is, the great Book, and they call the third **Sanguya Conioci**, that is, to see and love God in His glory. When Father Anthony asked them if the second person of their God, this great Book, was the same as those old papers they inveterately read and held in their hands, they said it was so.]

That said, the Polish translation features different modifications. The narrative pattern shifts from the first-person narrative, which is typical of

annual letters, to the third person narrative. Accordingly, Father Antonio is no longer a narrator; he is now a protagonist. Underlined in the quotation, the amplification provides information from the first letter. In fact, as he translates the second letter, Szembek uses the first letter whenever he sees fit to bring the content closer to the reader. In this case, this produces a certain paradox, as the reader may develop an impression that beliefs in keeping with Christian faith are ridiculous. One more detail is worthy of note. The sacred book of Buddhism was called *szpargal* [old scrap] (*libro* in the original), which demonstrates the translator's attitude to Tibetan culture, an attitude more disrespectful than that of the original author.

As he adds details from the first letter to the text, the translator strives to provide as much information on Tibet as possible. On their way to the Kingdom of Guge, Jesuit missionaries had to go through the Mana Pass (5,545 m a.s.l), where, in spring, adverse winter weather conditions still prevailed. In the second letter, the description of the journey is less detailed than in the first, and Szembek adds new content by providing a summary of the latter.

Druga część drogi piekłu podobna raczej (...) głość tylko sama ich [gór] przyrodzona albo śnieg widać było, który przez całe miesiące dziesięć tam pada, a przez dwa, w które ludzie na drogę puszczać się zwykli, mało co wstaje. Żadnego tam źródła ani wody tam nie masz, ale kawalców śniegu miasto picia nie raz zażywać muszą, żywność w sakwach albo w torbie mieć trzeba, która bywa z mąki jęczmienia prażonego. Śnieg tak wysoki i tak z wierzchu twardy, że prawdziwe skały z niego być zdały się; lecz pod nogami idących ustępuje i w nim ojciec Antoni z towarzyszem jako w górach jakich zapadał, wiążąc nie tylko po kolana i po pas, ale też i po szyję (...). Mrozów tak ciężkich doznali, iż że im nosy, ręce i nogi od zimna nie upadały, łaska Boża osobliwa była. (Szembek 2004: 186).

[The second leg of the journey was more of a hell (...) one could see only the innate barrenness of their [mountains] or snow, which falls ten months in a year in those regions, and during those two months when it does not, when people usually travel, it hardly melts at all. One cannot find a spring or water there, but they have to take chunks of snow as drink; one has to fill his saddlebag with food, which is made of roast barley flour. The snow is so high and hard on the surface that it looks like real rocks; but it gives way to the feet of wanderers; Father Anthony and his companion would sink in the snow as if it were mountains, the snow up to their knees or waist, but also to their neck (...). They suffered frostbites so great that it was only God's grace that let them keep their noses, hands, and legs intact.]

Szembek provides a quite faithful paraphrase of another passage, in which he nonetheless rearranges the sequence of description. He also gives free rein to his fancy when he replaces mint with marjoram (more homely), and mentions pear trees alongside chestnut trees.

Vi sono in gran numero altri arbori come castagni, ma infruttuosi che producono pure fiori bellissimi e in tanta abbondanza che ogni ramo pare un mazzo tanto ben compartito che non si può desiderare meglio. Non mancano i suoi fiori per terra, rose e gigli in abbondanza e altri non men belli che strani e in molti luoghi la terra è coperta per gran spazio di menta come la nostra, se ben di foglie più minute. Rendono più gradito e men difficile il viaggio le fontane che per le montagne scorrono, spiccandosi altre dalla più alta cima di quelle e altre sgorgando da vive pietre lungo la strada di acqua tanto cristallina e fresca che non si può desiderare di più... (de Andrade 1628: 7)

[There are many other trees, such as chestnut trees, which bear no fruit, but yield so much beautiful blossom that each and every bough looks like a finely arranged bouquet, so there is nothing more beautiful one could possibly desire. The land is also full of flowers, roses and lilies and many other equally strange and beautiful flowers in abundance; in many places, the land is covered in mint, which is like ours, albeit with smaller leaves. Streams that flow down the mountains make one's journey easier and more pleasant; some of them plunge from topmost crags, others spring from solid rock along the road with water so crystal-clear and fresh that there is nothing more one could possibly desire...]

Uszedłszy wiele dni drogi bardzo trudnej, doszedł do krajów takich, które bar dziej były podobne Rajowi onemu dawnemu aniżeli ziemi terażniejszej. Żywności i uciechy oczu ludzkich pełne, skały, acz bardzo wysokie, ale wielce na wierzchu szerokie, pełne fiołków, róż, lilii i wonnego kwiecica wszelkich farb tu niewidanego, miasto trawy tak majeranem (a daleko cudniejszym niżeli nasz) pokryte, że ledwie innej zieloności co widać było. Krynic i rzeczek bardzo wiele, kamieni niezliczonej rozliczności pięknych w sobie mających. Drzew i lasów wielkość i gęstość wielka, tak kasztanowych pełnych kwiecica białego miasto ości w Europie kasztany okrywających, jako i innego owocu a zwłaszcza gruszek pod którymi idąc szukać nie trzeba było żywności (Szembek 2004: 185–186).

[After many a hard day's journey, he reached countries that were more of a by-gone Paradise than today's world. They abounded in food and were delightful to the eye; their rocks, however soaring, were flat at the top, and full of violets, roses, lilies and fragrant flowers of every colour unknown to our people; their cities were so covered in grass and marjoram (far more splendid than ours)

that other greenery was virtually invisible. There were so many springs and rivulets, holding an infinite variety of beautiful rocks and pebbles. There were so many and impenetrable trees and forests, both chestnut trees covered in white bloom, like those in Europe, and other fruit trees, most notably pear trees, which gave food in abundance to anyone who came under their shade.]

The second account in Szembek's translation is equally intriguing. Giuliano Baldinotti, S.J., arrived in Goa in 1621, which he left for Macao, and later, in early 1626, departed for Tonkin, the northern part of today's Vietnam. The first Christian missionary in Vietnam, he was accepted at the court in Hanoi, where he spent six months. His account, which he penned after his return, was published in 1629 in Rome (Baldinotti 1629) and Kraków (Szembek 1629). The way the translator deals with the original is similar to that in the previous passage. While keeping foreign vocabulary and proper names, Szembek tries to explain their meaning. He changes the narrative pattern in that he disposes of the first-person narrator; he also strives to present facts in a more orderly manner, which is best evidenced in the report from Tibet and brings the text closer to the reader. His method is perfectly illustrated in the following passage:

generalmente parlando sono poco atti al culto dei **pagodi** (dai quali non chiedono mai altro che cose temporali) ossia essendo di buono intendimento, conoscono la falsità di tutte quelle sette o sia per difetto dei propri **bonzi** i quali non facendo professione di lettere e essendo sordidissimi, non son atti a persuadere; ovvero per essere inclinati all'esercizio dell'armi, particolarmente a quello dell'artiglierie e dei moschetti nei quali sono destrissimi. Sono di carnagione bianca, di statura alta e grande, gagliardi e coraggiosi. Vanno vestiti con una **cavaia**, che è una veste larga, aperta dinanzi e lunga fino a mezza gamba. Portano lunghi i capelli, con un cappello a foggia di montiera. I soldati portano le spade e le scimitarre ad armacollo. Son gente compassionevole, trattabile, fedele, allegra e non hanno vizi stranieri della Cina e del Giappone. La plebe è inclinata a rubare; perciò gastigano gravamente i ladri, come gli adulteri, con pena di morte (Baldinotti 1629: 129–130).

[Generally speaking, they are not very eager to worship their pagodas (which they ask but for worldly possessions) either because they are rational and can see through the falsehood of all these sects or because of their bonzos' fault, who fail to promote religious writings and are quite thick, and thereby unable to persuade anybody. Or perhaps because of their interest in military training, especially artillery and musket use, which they handle rather skilfully. They are of white complexion and great height; they are courageous and bold. Their

outfits are called cavaia, which is a loose-fitting robe, knee-long and open from the front. They wear long hair and hats like bonnets [?]. Soldiers carry swords and scimitars hanging over their shoulders. They are a sensitive people, lenient, faithful, and cheerful, without flaws such as those of the Chinese or Japanese. The common folk have a propensity to steal, which is why theft and adultery are severely punished, with death.]

Ludzie tamci są ciała białego, nam podobni, urody wysokiej i wielkiej; sił mocnych, serca wielkiego. Ubiór ich jest szata szeroka, z przodu na kształt delij naszych, otwarta do pół goleni długa. Włosy długie noszą, a czapki podobne tym, jakich w krajach naszych pralaci w domu, abo w swych kramach Włoszy siedząc abo pisząc używać zwykli. Z przyrodzenia są weseli, lutościwi, wierni, karku do rządzenia nie twardego, nie masz grzechów między nimi niezwykłych pogańskich jakowe się znajdują w Chinie i w Japonie. Cudzołóstwo gardłem karzą, złodziejstwo także, do którego pospółstwo skłonne. Wrodzoną skłonność mają do oręża i strzelby, a zwłaszcza z dział i moszkietów, w czym są bardzo dowcipni i chyży. Żołnierstwo ich abo szable, abo miecze na bindach abo pasach żołnierskich z ramienia pod pachę wiszących nosi.

Boga prawdziwego nie znają (...) mało dbają o nabożeństwo do swych **pagodów** abo bałwanów, których nigdy o nic innego nie proszą, tylko o doczesne rzeczy; a to abo dlatego, że widzą jako dowcipni i rozsądni swe sekty bez słusznego fundamentu ugruntowane, abo dla nikczemności i niesposobności swych **bonzów**, to jest księży swej pogańskiej, którzy nauką się nie bawiąc i nader nieochędożnymi około rzeczy swych i sami siebie będąc, do perswadowania błędów pogańskich poważności ani kredytu u swych nie mają, abo też dlatego, że wszytek umysł i serce utonęło w orężu i ćwiczeniu się w rzeczach do wojny należnych (Szembek 1629: B1 r-v).

[Those people are of white body, like us, massive and tall, powerful and strong, and of great heart. They wear loose-fitting robes, resembling our delias, open from the front and calf long. They wear long hair, and headgear like that of our prelates when at home or Italians as they sit or write in their stalls. They are cheerful, compassionate and faithful by nature, and easy to rule. They are not prone to unheard-of pagan sin like that of the Chinese or Japanese. Adultery, and theft, too, which their common folk have a propensity for, they punish with death. They have an innate drive for weapons and firearms, especially cannons and muskets, which they can handle in a clever and agile way. Their soldiers carry either sabres or swords, which they hang on a band or strap from their shoulders.

They do not know the true God (...) they have very little reverence for their **pagodas** or idols, which they ask for nothing but worldly possessions, which is either because they are clever and wise enough to see that there are no solid foundations for their sects or because of the vice and ineptitude of their **bonzos**,

that is, their pagan priests, who know very little about science and are too slovenly, both in their possessions and their appearance, to earn credit and gravity enough to dissuade them from their pagan errors, or because they devoted all their heart and mind to weapons, warfare, and military training.]

Szembek keeps foreign vocabulary in his translation (*pagodów, bonzów*) [pagodas, bonzos], and he also explains its meaning. At the same time, as he describes the appearance and dress of the local people, he seeks (probably following his fancy) analogies in the reality of the Polish readers (*cf.* underlined passages). Furthermore, he organises the description by starting from external features such as the appearance and clothes, and later moves on to customs and beliefs. He also willingly shares value judgements: he depicts priests with phrases that are nowhere to be found in the original, such as “nieochędożni około rzeczy swych i sami siebie będąc” [slovenly, both in their possessions and their appearance] or “błędy pogańskie” [pagan errors]. Likewise, he abandons the epistolary form and first-person narrator.

Based on the samples presented above, the comparison and contrast of the translations and originals allows an insight into the attitudes adopted by the translators. Szymon Wysocki's interest seems to be mainly in missions and religion. Accordingly, he eliminates a sizeable portion of references to the political and social situation of the countries in question. He keeps some of the information on history and geography, which seems to be crucial to the understanding of the context; however, he quotes only several proper names. If he uses any foreign culture-specific item, he also explains its meaning. Despite many cuts, he follows the structure of the text quite closely. Fryderyk Szembek is far more interested in the cultures described in the original. Szembek keeps foreign proper names and vocabulary, which he strives to explain to his readers. His interest is both in the issues of faith and geographical explorations. As demonstrated by his translations, he is very much intrigued by foreign cultures. Respectful of common people, he is nonetheless dismissive or even condemning of their priests. Szembek modifies the poetics of the text. Accordingly, the first-person account in the form of a letter to the government of the Society of Jesus transforms into the third-person *descriptio*. He also organises facts in a linear order and complements the narrative with information from outside of the original.

Following the historical approach to Translation Studies and its guidelines, one may now examine the who, where, when, and how of these translations and explain the differences between the strategies adopted by the two

translators. Most notably, however, one cannot lose sight of the translators and their history, which was repeatedly pointed out by Pym (“the central object should be the human translator, since only humans have the kind of responsibility appropriate to social causation”, Pym 2014: IX). The authors in question were both members of the Society of Jesus, albeit from two different generations. Wysocki was born in 1542, and Szembek in 1575. They both received a thorough education, and they worked with young people as teachers in Jesuit colleges. Moreover, Wysocki was the confessor of Queen Catherine Jagiellon of Sweden and the personal tutor of her son Prince Sigismund Vasa, later known as Sigismund III of Poland. Both Wysocki and Szembek may be called professional translators. Wysocki translated religious writings such as reports from the missions and hagiographies from Italian, Latin, and Spanish. Szembek’s interests were slightly broader in range, as they included the latest news, sensational information, and natural phenomena such as the explosion of Vesuvius (Szembek 1932). Therefore, it is no coincidence that he translated reports from Tibet and Vietnam, countries that were previously virtually unexplored, and he almost immediately published them in Poland.

Their approach to CSI (culture-specific items),<sup>5</sup> especially proper names, may also have other determinants. Szembek published his translations twenty years after Wysocki. By that time, Polish readers had already become slightly familiar with exotic realities and some of the foreign proper names. Partially, the trail was blazed by Wysocki and his translations. In the meantime, Scipione Amati’s report (Amati 1615) from the visit of Japanese envoys to Europe, in which the Kingdom of Vox was depicted, was published in Paweł Śliwski’s translation (Śliwski 1616). Most notably, a large number of readers gained access to *Relacje powszechne* by Paweł Łęczycki (Botero 1609, 1659), the translation of *Relazioni universali* by Giovanni Botero, an encyclopaedic account of the world, which enjoyed much popularity in seventeenth-century Europe. While extolling the successful procession of Catholicism across the continents, *Relazioni* also provided a broad range of geographical, political, and cultural information.

---

<sup>5</sup> “Those textually actualized items whose function and connotations in a source text involve a translation problem in their transference to a target text, whenever this problem is a product of the nonexistence of the referred item or of its different intertextual status in the cultural system of the readers of the target text” (Aixela 1996: 58).



One important question is that of who the implied reader of these translations was, what function they were expected to perform, and what influence the poetics prevalent in the receiving culture could possibly have on these translations. Lefevere's concept of *rewriting* may come in useful to discuss the issue of "patronage" (Lefevere 1992). The originals of Jesuit annual letters and reports from the missions may be treated as acts of *rewriting*. Commissioned by the government of the Society of Jesus, their authors rewrote the cultures of the East for European use. Additionally, they were censored before print. When intended for internal use, they served as sources of information and provided a list of obstacles to missionary activity. When published in print, they became an instrument of propaganda describing the achievements of the missionaries and promoting missionary activity among young people. The subsequent stage in the translation process was the rewriting of the original – in this particular case, of the texts originally written in Italian – into other languages, which sometimes resulted in considerable modifications.

Translations by Wysocki were provided from the accounts published in print, and as such already exposed to rewriting, since their publication in Rome was funded by the Society of Jesus. The poetics of these accounts followed that of the annual letters formulated by Alfonso de Polanco and the rules of contemporary epistolography, a genre entertaining much presence in the literature of that time. Translations by Wysocki perform functions similar to those of their originals, their target audience being mainly young adepts of the Society of Jesus. Their impact is best evidenced by the letters of 114 Polish Jesuit fathers in the collection of *indipetae* (requests to be sent to work in mission areas), which are now stored in the Jesuit Archives in Rome (ARSI) (Konior 2013: 186–187). Discussed above, the cuts reflect the preferences of the author; however, they are also suited to Polish readers and their poor knowledge of overseas countries. The poetics of the text remains the same, the target culture following similar rules and principles.

Essentially, texts translated by Szembek performed a function similar to the accounts mentioned above. They offered reports from extremely important and pioneering missionary expeditions. They were also selected and prepared for publication by the relevant authorities within the Society of Jesus. Other reports from Tibet, which later proliferated, were never to be published in print. One crucial aspect must be mentioned. The first letter from Tibet was despatched to the General Provincial in Lisbon instead of the General Curia in Rome, and was first published in Portuguese in 1626.

It was less concerned with religion or theology than the letter despatched to Rome. Its publication came at a particular historical moment. In the political context of that time, the arrival of the Portuguese in Tibet was to serve as a proof of the Portuguese expansion in the Far East and their contribution to the promotion of Christianity. The propaganda campaign, which led to the canonisation of Queen Elizabeth of Portugal (1271–1336), was intended to elevate Portugal among Catholic monarchies. As part of the campaign, de Andrade's letters were provided with a patriotic and religious introduction by Mateus Pinheiro (Didier 1996), which gave prominence to the mission in Tibet and featured a hilarious yet extremely telling translation error. The first letter represented a little kingdom of Guge as a state of unique prominence. As he wrote about the local king, de Andrade called him "el rey **do** Potente", namely, "the king of Tibet", the word *potente* deriving from *Bhotanta*, the designation of Tibet in Hindi (Toscano 1977: 105). The Portuguese edition in turn featured the phrase "el rey **o** Potente," that is, "a mighty king" (the error was perpetuated in the Polish translation). The political context (described above) had little impact on the Polish translation. That said, Szembek also sought patronage among powerful political figures. He dedicated the book to the Vice-Chancellor of the Crown Tomasz Zamojski, and he presented it to the politician in December 1628. Zamojski reimbursed printing and binding costs. The book was presented to the king and his queen consort and many court dignitaries (Mejor 2004: 12–28). A change in poetics (mentioned above) may also provoke some insights. The texts translated by Szembek no longer follow the rules formulated by de Polanco; as such, they do not belong in the realm of epistolography. They contain a lot of information on the history, geography, and culture of the countries in question. As may be demonstrated in my previous publications (Miszalska 2017), these texts translations may be defined as an inchoate form of reportage, given that the narrator is actually involved in the events, there is a short distance between the time of the events and the time of the narration, and the facts are sequenced in keeping with the chronology of "what happened". Szembek abandons this form. As a thorough and experienced teacher, who was not only interested in the religious dimension of the originals, but most notably the story of geographical explorations, he sought to create texts that were clear, logical, and easy to understand, thereby drifting towards the static genre of *descriptio*, which had already been rooted in Polish culture by that time. Therefore, he kept the functional component of his poetics, which was

to inform and encourage, but he abandoned the inventory component, that is, the genre of the source text (Lefevere 1992: 32–34).

Does this analysis of the translations of the reports from religious missions in the Far East shed light on the issues presented in the introduction? I tried to compare and contrast two translators who had a lot in common – Jesuit fathers who translated similar texts, and who were exposed to different pressures and determinants, as they created at two different historical moments. Arguably, one has to recognise the contribution of the two translators to a body of knowledge on the Far East among Polish readers. Their texts serve as evidence of early borrowings of the vocabulary depicting the reality of the East (*bonza, lama, pagoda*), the usage of which is dated to much later times by dictionaries (Bańkowski 2000). The way the two Jesuit translators deal with the form of the source texts is also intriguing. Wysocki offered a faithful rendition, while Szembek produced a creative rewriting. The latter's *descriptios* of the exotic countries belong in the Polish history of travel writing, which was almost never published in print at that time.

Translated by Bartosz Sowiński

## Bibliography

- [Anonymous] 1603. *O rozszerzeniu wiary s. chrześcijańskiej katolickiej w Ameryce na Nowym świecie, zwłaszcza w królestwie Peru, opisanie krótkie księdza Jakuba Torres Societatis Iesu, prokuratora prowincji Peru, gdzie się też przypominają niektóre osobliwe i znaczne sprawy lat blisko przeszłych. Na końcu przydany jest List roczny wysp Philippin roku 1600, na polskie z włoskiego przełożone*, Kraków: Druk. A. Piotrkowczyka.
- Amati S. 1615. *Historia del regno di Voxu del Giapone, dell'antichità, nobiltà, e valore del suo re Idade Masamune*, Roma: Giacomo Mascardi.
- Aixela J.F. 1996. "Culture-specific Items in Translation" [in:] R. Alvarez, M.C.-A. Vidal (eds.), *Translation, Power, Subversion*. Clevedon: Multilingual Matters, pp. 52–78.
- Baldinotti G. 1629. *Relatione del viaggio di Tunquim* [in:] *Lettere dell'Ethiopia dell'an. 1626. sino al marzo del 1627. E della Cina dell'anno 1625 fino al febraro del 1626. Con una breve relatione del viaggio al regno Tunquim, nuovamente scoperto*, Roma: Bartolomeo Zannetti.
- Bańkowski A. 2000. *Etymologiczny słownik języka polskiego*, vol. 1–2, Warszawa: Wydawnictwo Naukowe PWN.
- Bassnett S., Lefevere A. 1990, *Translation, History and Culture*, London–New York: Pinter Publishers.

- Botero G. 1609. *Relacje powszechne*, tłum. P. Łęczycki, Kraków: Druk. M. Loba, II wydanie: 1659. *Theatrum świata wszystkiego*, Kraków: Druk. Dziedziców S. Lenchowskiego Bertulowicza.
- Cerqueira L. 1607. *Relatione della gloriosa morte patita da sei cristiani giaponesi*, Roma: Bartolomeo Zannetti.
- D'hulst L. 2010. "Translation History" [in:] *Handbook of Translation Studies*, vol. 1, Amsterdam–Philadelphia: John Benjamins, pp. 398–405.
- de Andrade A. 1627. *Nuovo scoprimento del gran Cataio overo Regno di Tibet*, Roma: Francesco Corbelletti.
- 1628. *Lettere annue del Tibet del 1626 e della Cina del 1624. Scritte al M.R.P. Mutio Vitelleschi generale della Compagnia di Gesù, Tibet*, Roma: Francesco Corbelletti.
- 2004. *Niedawne odkrycie Wielkiego Katakju albo Państw Tybetu*, trans. I. Kania, Kraków: Wydawnictwo WAM.
- Didier H. 1996. "Introduction" [in:] H. Didier (ed.), *Les Portugais au Tibet. Les premières relations jésuites (1624–1635)*, Paris: Chandeigne, pp. 7–26.
- Friedrich M. 2008. *Circulating and Compiling "Litterae Annuae". Towards the History of the Jesuit System of Communication*, "Archivum Historicum Societatis Iesu" 153, pp. 3–39.
- Gurgul M., Miszalska J., Surma-Gawłowska M., Woźniak M. 2007. *Od Dantego do Fo. Włoska poezja i dramat w Polsce (od XVI do XXI wieku)*, Kraków: Collegium Columbinum.
- Konior J. 2013. *Historia polsko-chińskich kontaktów kulturowych w XVII wieku (na przykładzie misji jezuickich)*, Kraków: Wydawnictwo WAM.
- Lefevre A. 1992. *Translation, Rewriting and the Manipulation of Literary Fame*, London–New York: Routledge.
- Mejor M. 2004. "Tybet, wielkie państwo w Azji..." [in:] A. de Andrade, *Niedawne odkrycie Wielkiego Katakju albo Państw Tybetu*, trans. I. Kania, Kraków: Wydawnictwo WAM, pp. 12–28.
- Miszalska J., Gurgul M., Surma-Gawłowska M., Woźniak M. 2011. *Od Boccaccia do Eco. Włoska proza narracyjna w Polsce (od XVI do XXI wieku)*, Kraków: Collegium Columbinum.
- Miszalska J. 2015. *Z ziemi włoskiej do Polski. Przekłady z literatury włoskiej w Polsce do końca XVIII wieku*, Kraków: Collegium Columbinum.
- 2017. "U źródeł reportażu: siedemnastowieczne przekłady jezuickich relacji z Dalekiego Wschodu" [in:] G. Brogi Bercoff, M. Ciccarini, M. Sokołowski (eds.), „Inna komparatystyka”: *od dokumentu do wyobraźni*, Warszawa: IBL, pp. 125–149.
- Pym A. 2009. "Humanising Translation History", *Hermes* 42, pp. 23–48.
- 2014. *Method in Translation History*, New York–London: Routledge (ed. princeps 1998).
- Rodrigues J. 1610. *Lettera di Giappone dell'anno 1606*, Milano: Di Pacifico Pontio, & Gio. Battista Piccaglia.
- Szembek F. 1628. *Tybet wielkie państwo w Azyey (...) to jest krótkie opisanie zwyczajów, nabożeństwa i wiary (...) w Rzymie drukiem światu wszystkiemu ogłoszonych, roku teraźniejszego 1628*, Kraków: Druk. F. Cezarego.

- 1629. *Tunquim królestwo możne w Azyey (...) z relacji w Rzymie roku terażniejszego 1629 językiem włoskim wydrukowany, a z Makao w Chinie w roku 1626 posłany, krótko opisane od jednego kapłana tegoż zakonu*, Kraków: Druk. F. Cezarego.
- 1632. *Zapał srogi góry neapolitańskiej. Nowa Niniwe Zacne Neapolim w żalobie, to jest ogień okrutny góry Wezuwius we Włoszech...*, Kraków: Druk. F. Cezarego.
- 2004. "Tybet wielkie państwo w Azyey..." [in:] A. de Andrade, *Niedawne odkrycie Wielkiego Kataju albo Państw Tybetu*, trans. I. Kania, Kraków: Wydawnictwo WAM, pp. 181–238.
- Śliwski P. 1616. *Posłowie japońscy do Pawła V Biskupa Rzymskiego*, Kraków: Druk. F. Cezarego.
- Torres Bollo D. 1603. *Relatione breve del P. Diego de Torres della Compagnia di Giesù, Procuratore della Provincia del Perù (...) dove si raccontano anche alcuni particolari notabili successi gli anni prossimi passati, per consolatione de i Religiosi di detta Compagnia in Europa; al fine s'aggiunge la lettera annua dell'Isole Filippine del 1600*, Roma: Luigi Zannetti.
- Toscano G.M. 1977. *Alla scoperta del Tibet: relazioni dei missionari del secolo XVII*, Bologna: Editrice Missionaria Italiana.
- Trigault N. 1615. *Due lettere annue della Cina del 1610 e del 1611, scritte al M.R.P. Claudio Acquaviva, generale della Compagnia di Giesù*, Milano: Di Pacifico Pontio, & Gio. Battista Piccaglia.
- Wysocki S. 1608. *Nowiny pewne z nowego świata, mianowicie z Japonu; to jest o chwalebnej śmierci sześciu szlachciców, Japończyków, (...) powieść listowna do Rzymu posłana od najwielebniejszego Ludwika Cequera, biskupa japońskiego*, Kraków: Druk. M. Loba.
- 1611. *Nowiny albo dzieje dwuletnie z Japonii i z Chin, krain pogańskich nowego świata*, Kraków: Druk. J. Szarfenbergera.
- 1616. *Nowiny albo dzieje dwuletnie chineńskie (...) roku pańskiego 1610, 1611*, Kraków: Drukarnia Łazarzowa.